

Best exercises for Strengthening CALF muscles

The calf muscle actually refers to three separate muscles in lower leg that work together, GASTROCNEMIUS, SOLEUS & PLANTARIS muscle. Strong calf muscle can improve flexibility, Posture and Balance. They also help lower risk of injuries.

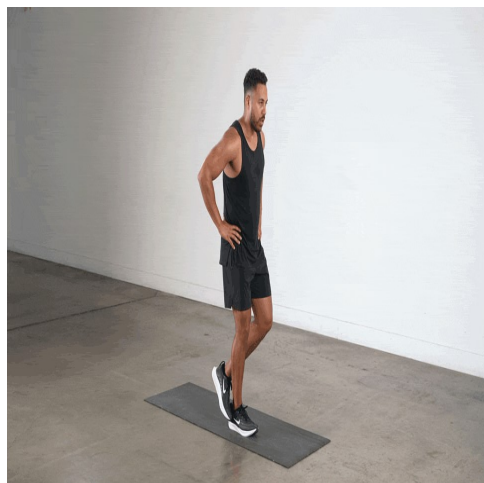
Few exercises explained here for strengthening calf muscle,

1. Calf raises(Heel raise) – there are many variations of this simple heel raise exercise, person can do this exercise without any resistance in beginning, in standing and sitting position. Start with 12 repetitions and 3 sets of it. Increase repetitions to 15. Later one can add weight/Resistance to this exercise like dumbbells, barbell on shoulders, increase difficulty by single leg weighted calf raise, Donkey calf raises (weight on lower back, lean forward)

Calf raise



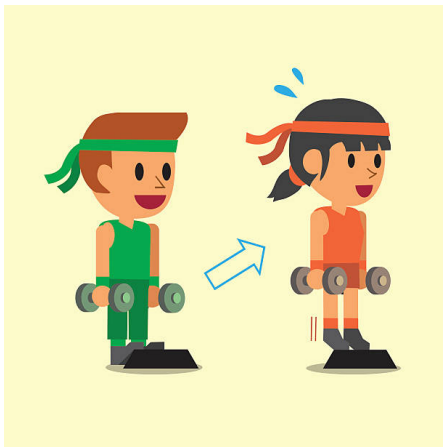
Single calf raise



Donkey calf raise



Resisted calf raise



2. Toe walking- Toe walking is a simple but effective way to strengthen calf muscle. Stand upright with good posture, lift your heels and come onto your toes, walk forward only on toes. Keep steps small and controlled. Patient who has balance disturbance, should take extra care and support. Start with 20-30 seconds and 2-3 rounds, progress to 1-2 minutes. Weight can be added in this exercise like hold dumbbells while walking.

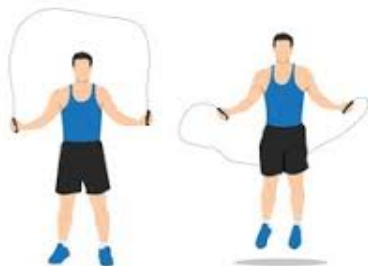
Toe walking



Resisted toe walking exercise



3. Jump rope - This exercise is also a simple exercise which build power, endurance, elasticity of the calf muscles. Do it after basic exercises like heel raise and toe walking. Start with 20-30 seconds and 3 sets, progress to 45-60 seconds and 4 sets. Rest between sets should be minimum 45-60 seconds. do it on flat and shock absorbing surface to avoid strain to joints.



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4. Leg press machine– Sit on the leg press machine, place only the balls of feet (heel not touching the plate) keep knees slightly bent. Push the platform using toes. Hold it for

1-2 seconds, slowly lower heels down. Repeat it in controlled manner. Repetitions should be 12-15 and sets 3-4. progression can be made by increasing resistance.



5. Stair sprinting – this is high intensity exercise that improve speed and endurance of calf muscles. For this exercise, find a stair case with good grip, start at the bottom in an upright posture. Sprint up the stairs on your toes. Take quick, controlled steps. Walk down slowly for recovery. Beginners 5-6 sprints (10-15 seconds each) progress to 6-10 sprints (15-20 seconds)



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